



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chicago Ecological Services Field Office
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IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/AES-CIFO.

February 21, 2014

Mr. Ramon Mendoza
United States Environmental Protection Agency
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Mendoza:

This is in response to your request for information on sensitive aquatic species present in the Rock River downstream of the Lawrence Hardware site, Sterling, Illinois. Abandoned waste including acid, cyanide, used oil, and a 100 cubic yard ash pile are present at this site, which is located in the river floodplain.

The federally endangered sheepsnose mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*), has been found approximately 6 miles downstream of the site. The state threatened black sandshell mussel (*Ligumia recta*) has been located downstream in closer proximity to the site.

Please take action to prevent release of the acid, cyanide, oil and ash into the river. If these substances enter the water column they could cause harm to these mussels and other aquatic species. The large volume of ash could coat the river bottom in depositional areas, bury aquatic organisms, and interfere with the function of gill tissues in mussels and fish.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Edward Karecki